

Common reactions and feelings

There is no right or wrong way to feel after sexual assault and no set time for when you should start to feel better. You will draw on your own unique strengths and skills to survive and cope with sexual assault.

Here are some common reactions and feelings that you may experience as a response to the trauma of sexual assault.

Feelings of powerlessness and loss of control	'I feel so helpless. Will I ever be in control again?'
Emotional numbness	'Why am I so calm? Why can't I cry?'
Denial	'Was it really sexual assault? I'm okay. I'll be alright.'
Disturbed sleep	Sleepless nights and nightmares.
Flashbacks	Memories of the assault often return without warning.
Guilt and self-blame	'I know I did something to make this happen. If only I hadn't...'
Loss of confidence	'I can't do anything anymore, even the simplest things.'
Mood changes	'I feel like I'm going crazy!'
Low self-esteem	'I'm disgusted by myself, by the memories. I'm just worthless.'
Depression	'How am I going to go on? I feel so tired and hopeless.'
Fear	'I'm scared of everything. I'm afraid to go out or be alone.'
Anxiety	'I'm so tense. I'm a nervous wreck.'
Anger	'I want to kill him. I hate him, I hate everything and everyone.'
Loss of sexual confidence	'I just can't bear to be touched or looked at.'
Embarrassment and shame	'I feel so dirty.' 'What will people think?' 'This doesn't happen to men.' 'I can't tell anyone'.

Where to get support

Specialist sexual assault counsellors can help you to understand your feelings and reactions in response to sexual assault.

- Sexual Assault Crisis Line (Victoria): 1800 806 292
- Find your local specialist sexual assault service in Victoria: sasvic.org.au/our-members
- 1800 RESPECT (Australia-wide): 1800 737 732